Challenge To Citizenship

By Paul Green
Author, Teacher, Pulitzer Prize Winner

Fifty-[illegible] Annual

Phi Beta Kappa Address

Alpha Chapter of North Carolina
May 15, 1936

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Phi Beta Kappa Banquet

North Room, Lenoir Hall

University of North Carolina

Chapel Hill, North Carolina

6:30 P.M., May 15, 1956

Presiding ..... *Co-President Raymond Fletcher Snipes*

Invocation ..... *Dr. William Wells*

Address ..... *Dr. Paul Green*

Challenge To Citizenship

By PAUL GREEN

What I have to say to you graduates tonight and say informally is more of a homily or sermon perhaps than a piece of research or scholarship usually common to such Phi Beta Kappa occasions. But I plead the kindly indulgence of your secretary who, when he asked me to make this address, said I could talk on anything I wished and in any way I wished.

So I want to talk about North Carolina—about some of her history, her accomplishments, and failures even, and about a few of her present-day challenges and problems—especially one—with which you and I are faced. Most of you will spend your lives and do your work as citizens in this state. The learning you have got, the scholarship and ideals, the political faith you have developed at this university will have their main meaning and fruitfulness here. I hope of course that what I say will have some pertinence for you others who will go elsewhere for your future.

1.

When Philip Amadas and Arthur Barlow, trusty captains for Sir Walter Raleigh out of England, came on the first expedition to Roanoke Island in 1584, they found a beautiful new world here. The air was enchanted with sweet odors and all around were "many goodly woods full of Deere, Conies, Hares, and Fowle." The trees were "the highest and reddest Cedars of the world," and the sandy shores were "so full of grapes, as the very beating and surge of the sea overflowed them."

Richard Hakluyt, the contemporary historian, writing about this part of the new world—which later became North Carolina—declared it to be "the goodliest land under the cope of heaven."

It was the goodliest land then, and now in these days of the present, looking out through my own home-hungry eyes, I too declare it still to be the goodliest land. If I am lovingly prejudiced, be it so, for I have lived long enough to know that home is home and without a home to rest his heart in a man is more lost than not.

Between that long-ago time and now—a stretch of nearly four hundred years—this Raleigh's Eden knew and suffered plenty of waste, frustration, anguish and despair —and worst of all self-degradation. Many of these evils and sorrows are still with us, too much so. But they are growing less year by year, I think, and to make them less and still less, to make these evils shrink away and the proper virtues of our hearts come forward and thrive in their place, an unrelenting dedication is necessary on our part, ceaseless and exciting effort is demanded. And the responsibility that this be a fact rests upon the shoulders and the minds and characters of all of us, especially on you young people coming on. For we older ones have about done our work, whatever of damage it was or of good it might be. And in the words of the usual commencement orator and moralist—even as we received the future from our forefathers out of the past, just so you must receive the future from us too and re-invigorate it with inspiration and strength for those that come after you.

Thus true progress is made or not and human lives are rich and full—or the more empty and dull.

After the early colonization attempts of Ralph Lane, of John White and Richard Grenville—all sharing in the knowledge and the propulsion of Sir Walter Raleigh's dream beyond the sea and all failing—this land of Carolina remained undisturbed for nearly a hundred years. It

was still the goodliest land of fruits and flowers, of fish and animals, of thick shadow-laden forests and the furtive-footed red man. The despairing search for the Lost Colony ended in 1602 when Sir Walter sent his last expedition under Samuel Mace over to Roanoke Island. Mace like his predecessors, finding no trace of the settlers, loaded his ship with sassafras and cedar and returned to England, and their fate has remained a mystery to this day.

Queen Elizabeth died the following year, 1603, and Raleigh fell under the slovenly and cruel disfavor of James I. His vision of a mighty stream of men and horses and ships moving, flowing toward the setting sun for the making of a new English nation perished with him under the headsman's axe. His holdings and interests in the new world had already been given over to the London Company. And the ships now being sent westward by that company shied away from the sucking shoals of Cape Fear and Hatteras and found haven in the deep waters of the Chesapeake. Thus Jamestown, Virginia, became the first permanent English settlement in America and not Roanoke Island in North Carolina.

2.

The years passed and Carolina continued a wilderness as it had been from time unending. Its bars and shallow sounds along the coast, its wayward winds and hurricanes were an effective barrier to any further effort at colonizing from the sea. Now and then a stray Indian trader ventured into this vast stretch of forest, and in 1709 John Lawson came exploring down from the west as far as New Bern to the east. In his history he gave a vivid account of the streams, of the hills, the plains and the tall trees waiting, waiting in a huge silence for the main coming of the white man. It was not until some years later that the religious-hounded and the religious-minded Scotch began to make their settlements along the jungled Cape Fear Valley.

And there they sweated and prayed and cleared away the mighty sycamores, the sweetgums, oaks and pines to make their small farms and build their poor squatting cabins. Here they grazed their cattle, read and argued the Bible, distilled their brandy and kept a sharp and judgmenting eye upon the sins of their fellowmen. In the meantime a scattering of English wastrels and wayward-footed fellows had progued on down the Currituck peninsula overland from the north out of Virginia and begun to spread their settlements around the shallow sounds and back up into the mainland.

Gradually small holdings of lands and Negroes were accumulated all along the eastern coastal plain. In the Piedmont region and mountains of the western part of the state, the Scotch-Irish, German and English settlers were moving down the valleys from Pennsylvania, Maryland and western Virginia to carry on the same sort of colonizing—but minus the Negroes.

In the east the development of the naval stores industry—if such an outdoor activity of tar, pitch and turpentine could be called an industry—increased the wealth of the people there and promoted the importing of more Negro slaves up from Charleston or through the port at Wilmington.

When this industry was exploited to near exhaustion, the inhabitants of the coastal plain returned to their farming, and by the middle of the nineteenth century had again established adequate but small free-holdings with here and there a larger house which might grudgingly be called a mansion. The settlers up in the hills westward continued as before with their little patches of crops, their heavy breeding of children, sermons and politics.

3.

And then came the senseless horror of the Civil War. How far ahead of where she is today North Carolina would

be but for that war, no one knows. And the same query would well fit any other Southern state. But certainly she would be far, far more advanced than she is. The slaughtering of the best of the young people of a state or nation can only cripple and deter the driving march of that state, that nation. It is true that out of this struggle came the abolition of slavery, but an awful price was paid for the righting of a wrong which reason long before should have righted. And what profit is there if in getting rid of one evil we have to commit a like or greater evil? Slavery and the war were both creations of irrationality, of prejudice and blindness, no matter what economic logic might claim.

But where there is no real leadership the people perish.

And thousands of North Carolina's young men lay dead on the battlefields, houses burned, property destroyed, and a horde of homeless, shiftless Negroes turned loose throughout the state. Not only that but a crazy social system was delivered onto us as a result of the catastrophe.

From the war a sort of caste system resulted, ill-defined but nevertheless real and devastating—the property owner, the poor white, and the Negro.

And during the long dead years after, a half century of them, these three classes lived in something of a desperate and turmoiling futility. Maybe these fifty years of uncreative living in North Carolina were necessary for what has finally followed—the surge of progress with which our hearts are now beginning to pulse and sing along. Maybe so, as the scientific historians can claim, but I still raise my lament and do not believe it.

But there is this value in it though, the value of remembrance. It is a sad story, these fifty years, and worth remembering in that we may the more judiciously, charitably and thoroughly carry on the great work in which we are now presently engaged.

During those fifty years the Negro remained at the bottom, and the sorriest North Carolina white man could

say without getting up out of his splint-bottomed chair or shifting his wad of chewing tobacco in his jaw, " I'm better'n he is, for God so intended it to be," having reference thereby to the Scriptures which do say—as that old devout preacher down at Pleasant Union Church in Harnett County used to maintain to me—that Cain, son of Adam the first man, went up into the land of Nod and married a gorilla, and out of this union came the cursed and blighted Negro race. The poor white in North Carolina could never get so low that there wasn't somebody beneath him to look up to him and call him "mister." The helplessness and vomit-sick loneliness of nothing beneath were not so acutely known to him as to the black man. The Negro was at the bottom, and beyond him downward one could not go in the human scale.

No one looked up to the Negro in those years, unless it was the sticks and stones and beasts of the fields. And however kind they were in their insensitivity, they did not speak his language, they brought no comfort to his hurt heart. And in order to survive and keep his mind, he built himself a refuge in a world apart from social castes and evils and torments of the white man which his oppressor, by virtue of his oppression, felt no need to build. Ignorant and handicapped in goods and tools and instruments, he had to depend for inner release and reaches of his imagination upon his own natural endowment as a human being. In this case it was his voice. It had to be his voice, for his hands were too busy otherwise in swinging the pick, in wielding the hoe, in showering down upon the axe—to help the white man build his roads, to lay the foundations for his banks, his colleges and his churches—into which last he the digger might not enter—and his factories. Dig and dig and dig, the song went. Dig this world in two, dig on to the setting sun, for they ain't no rising sun till I die!—

> "Look down, look down that lonesome road,
> The hacks all dead in line,

Some give a nickel, some give a dime
To bury this poor body of mine."

The Negro learned to sing. His religion became a song, his life was eased by song. And out of his great need he produced an art—the Negro folksong and the spiritual. But he was unconscious of its meaning to the world out yonder, a world he did not know and one that in the main was ignorant of him.

But all was not lost to the ways of evil in those years. For freedom of the soul, the inner soul, won out of human bondage is the sweetest freedom of all. And from his suffering the Negro developed a dignity, a stoicism to evil and pain superior to that of his white neighbor and which now in these later days of his struggle for self-expression and free determination in the world are standing him in good stead.

But too much of his life was wasted in sheer fortitude. He had little time for anything else.

And as for the Negro's neighbor, the North Carolina poor white, he produced pretty much nothing through all those dreary years except himself. The narrow moralism of the Scotch settlers carried on in him, Methodist, Baptist, or Holy Roller, and he walked his lightless track with stinking shirt and unshaven face and one gallus plough-handle stoop, oppressed by the world and the strait-jacket of his religion. The juice and comedy of living were squeezed out of him, and he was left weazened-souled and dry-hearted as a shuck. The cramp of poverty, the clutch of ignorance and the evil dreams of his lurid mind gnarled him into bitterness. And when by some rare miracle of grace the tiny modest voice of true song or poetry or even a flower of beauty sprouted by his doorstep to waft its perfume along the sullen wind, he was instantly full of supicion and ready to jeer it into silence or shrivel its bud with the spittle of his tobacco juice. As the Bible said, walk the straight and narrow path and let there be no too loud laughing, no un-

seemly shuffle of the dancing foot, no painted cheeks, no scarlets lips, no merry inviting fun-filled eyes. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, and the more empty and quiet and dead the more holy it would be.

As for the third class of landlord, businessman, property owner—well, during those years the instinct for profits and power and exploitation was teased into full flush of activity in the situation in which he found himself. He was the banker, the lawyer, the storekeeper, the real estate man, the fertilizer dispenser, the mule and horse trader, the loan shark, the cotton and tobacco buyer, the installment merchant, the insurance agent, and patent medicine drug store vendor.

With pencil and paper and sometimes adding machines, and the mystic manipulation of numbers, the short term note, the long term note, the slap of good fellowship upon the shoulder, the intimate statement and devout affirmation of comradeship and trust and honesty, these men would gather their ten, their twenty, their thirty per cent from the Negro and the poor white, sweating them grievously in their bonds even as they themselves were sweated by the big manufacturers and insurance men farther north in New York and New England. And year after year these poor ones would pay their toll from the lonely ploughman's furrow that led but to sickness and the grave.

True, from this energetic class of landlord, property owner, businessman, banker, there came some sort of progress for the state, but it was dearly won. Railroads were built with mules, hired-out convicts and a horde of underprivileged labor, black and white. And manufacturing and industry got something of a start—and got it on an average labor wage of less than $150 a year. Writing at that time, Walter Hines Pages, later ambassador to England under Woodrow Wilson, said that these men "held the country and all the people back in almost the same

economic and social state in which slavery left them. There was no hope for the future under their domination. There would be no broadening of thought because only old thoughts were acceptable. No change in society, because society's chief concern was to tolerate no change. The whole community would stand still or slip further back."

And Holland Thompson, a native North Carolinian, envisioning a New South ahead, said—"Individuals of a type almost unknown in the South, though common in industrial societies generally, appear here and there. They are cold, shrewd, far-sighted. Sentiment in them does not interfere with the strict working of the principle of self-advantage."

And all the while going up and down the land and adding his evangelical and fervent blessing to ease the bondage in the status quo went the hedge-priest of God, interlocutor and end man in one, talking of the wages of sin and the house not built with hands and the act of repentance and sobbing clamor at the mourner's bench, by which loud contrition all evil and all remembrance of former deeds of sin were wiped away. "For the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin and become servants to God ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end—everlasting life."

And thus the way was pointed to the place of main concern, the New Jerusalem in yonder world with its jeweled gates and its streets of gold where all tears were wiped away and grief was no more and where the angels lay around in the shade of the tree of life taking it easy and playing harps and singing their songs in praise of Jehovah. And all the while down below on earth, this goodliest land of ours was perishing in ugliness and decay.

But love and the secret getting of children went on down here as they had since man began. Breasts burned with some ambition, hope flourished or died and envy too —just as always. The sun rose in its glory and set the same.

The moon shone at night. The birds sang, and the raging summer storms tore the sky to tatters with their fearsome cannonading over Hatteras, over Rocky Mount, over Asheville even as now. Drought and wind, storm, rain and wet weather, bud and leaf and winter-freeze were the same. Man walked among these wonders even as now, but he saw no glory in them. There was no poet's tongue to sing their praise.

4.

Then in the early years of this present century things began to change. The long drought of emptiness was broken, and some rain began to fall. Maybe the very length and severity of the drought helped it to come. We became shamefacedly conscious of that drought. Whatever the reason, new leaders began growing up in the state with a new point of view—men who saw the world with different eyes and saw the opportunities and challenges in that world. No doubt the coming of the machine age helped to bring this change to pass, though North Carolina had little or nothing to do with its coming. The initiative and energy of creative genius which produced it came from other states—in the north or middle west. In a single year soon after the Civil War citizens of Ohio took out patents on fifteen hundred inventions—cornshellers, reaping machines, cash registers, adding machines, riding ploughs, guano distributors, hoisting cranes, machine tools, hydraulic presses, cranes, derricks and the like. But in that same year, so far as I have been able to find out, not a single invention came out of North Carolina. But we prospered by these inventions, as they soon found their way into the state to help increase the production in our agriculture, in our infant commerce and in our beginning manufacturing plants.

Karl Marx says that the capitalistic Ephraim will never be parted from his idol of monetary profit except by

force or revolution. Marx was wrong in this contention, I believe, as he was in many of his declarations of dialectical materialism. For with the new leadership in North Carolina in this twentieth century there came also and however slowly a new attitude toward its people, its resources, its financial requirements—an attitude of cooperation and social responsibility.

One of the chief pioneers in this new view was Governor Charles B. Aycock. And for him the key to progress for the people of the state was education, not education for the few, but for all the people, white and black. He dreamed education, he preached education, he lived it. He went back and forth across the state, up and down the South, urging his blazing cause and proving it a practical need as he went.

"It is demonstrable that wealth increases as education of the people grows," he said. "Our industries will be benefited; our commerce will expand; our railroads will do a larger business when we shall have educated all the children of the state. It will be a glorious day for us if our people in the hour of prosperity and wonderful growth and development can realize that men can never grow higher and better by rising on the weakness and ignorance of their fellows, but only by aiding their fellows and lifting them to the same high plane which they themselves occupy." And in the last speech of his life, made at Birmingham, Alabama, in the spring of 1912, he was still strenuously urging the cause of universal education when he fell dead on the platform. The last word that came from his lips was the word—"education."

After Aycock came others likewise devoted to progress and a new order of things—among them Charles D. McIver, J. Y. Joyner, E. C. Branson, Josephus Daniels, Edward Kidder Graham, William Louis Poteat, Clarence Poe, and more lately Louis R. Wilson, Howard W. Odum, J. M. Broughton, Frank Graham, Gerald Johnson, S. H.

Hobbs, Rupert Vance, Jonathan Daniels, Gordon Blackwell, Harriet Herring, Katharine Jocher, W. T. Couch, William T. Polk, and still more lately and especially Benjamin Swalin and Robert Lee Humber.

5.

And in the fields of finance, of commerce and industry, too, our bankers and manufacturing and political leaders—following the early civic-minded example of D. A. Tompkins—showed a new understanding of the state's problems and the need to solve them as keepers of the public weal. Relations between labor and capital improved, better wages and housing and health resulted. Production increased and markets were stimulated.

The families of Duke, Reynolds, Hanes, Gray, Cohn, Cannon and many others also began to work under a new and affirmative dispensation of cooperation. The time of heartless exploitation and callous disregard of human rights and requirements was going out of favor. Aycock's educational creed at last was being applied—"You cannot get the best for your boy and girl until you are ready to give the best to my boy and girl." True for millionaires, tenant farmers and factory workers alike.

And under this new guidance and leadership, North Carolina moved forward. The story of that progress is apparent today all around us. And lucky for us it was that when these fresh ideals of leadership came, we had to our hand and use the multitudinous and cunning products, gadgets and devices of the machine age with which to put them into practice. Maybe one helped produce the other, thus confirming again that all things work for good when cooperative men intend it.

For machinery is our universal and perfect servant. It is our physical emancipator. It speaks a single world-wide language and will serve alike all men of whatever color or creed or calling. Only brains are needed to know

how to make it go. And brains are the common possession of all men, whether black, white or brown, with kinky hair or straight.

And with the dynamo, the airplane, the gas engine, the automobile, radio, movies, television, the bulldozer, the farm tractor, the microscope, the refrigerator, the diesel engine, the computer, atomic power, and a thousand other marvels man is finally subduing the world around him. Who could dare set a limit to what will yet be created, what will yet be understood—the cure for cancer, heart disease, the nature of light, gravitation, radiation and magnetism and matter, and the secret and control of life itself? And the greatest secret of all yet to be found out—the moral and social control of man himself?

Now is the best of all times to be alive in the world, the best time to be born, to be young, to be growing up and reaching ahead. And in this mighty adventure in the twentieth century, North Carolina is beginning to take her part. And our citizens now have a chance for creative and abundant living the like of which their parents and grandparents never had.

In these rich and productive recent years we have seen the lonely poverty-stricken one-room log school house give way to modern consolidated education plants with good teachers, laboratories, books and modern facilities; seen our sandy and clay-mirey roads transformed into boulevards and hardsurfaced highways; seen hospitals and colleges and churches rising in the land from Manteo to Murphy; our country homes painted and equipped with all up-to-date furnishings and conveniences; our cotton and tobacco farms mechanized and exuberant with strong and efficient labor; our bare and once eroded slopes growing green in the wintertime, and livestock and cattle adding profit and pleasure where once emptiness and marauding flourished to desolation; hydroelectric plants along our streams; modern factories in hamlet, town and city—

whether of tobacco, textiles, furniture, machinery, electronics, synthetic fabrics, machine tools, steel fabrication, food and feed processing, boat-building, nylon-making, leather goods, woolens, pulpwood processing or whatnot; and home industries and weaving and handicrafts, potteries, wood carving and ceramics.

Here now is plenty of chance for all to roll up their sleeves, lift up their hearts and hands and clamorous voices and go to it. Here is plenty of space to spread out in, to intensify our efforts—more than fifty thousand square miles of space. And these miles of earth are rich and mellow and fruitful and waiting to be made into an earthly garden. The climate is mild here, the rainfall is plentiful, and the sun is kind to man and beast and bird. And clay and wood and stone are all around with which to build our habitations and our homes. And lakes and running creeks and rivers and stretching forests are on every hand in abundance for all uses of joy and recreation.

6.

But what about one of the most important things of all? What about the art of living itself—living as an art? There is more to existence than the creation of foods and services, of barter and trade, of growing crops and selling them. In every man there burns a primal impulse, an urge to the making of a more pleasing and beautiful world.

A good house, a good car, good roads, money in the bank, a satisfaction of physical needs, food, clothing, shelter, security against want—these are blessings, virtues even. These must and usually do come first, first in time if not in final significance. These are practical necessities now. But they only prepare the way for what is of greater value—a truly good and noble and cultural living. And for this last—beauty, harmony, symmetry and strength of soul as well as health and comfort of body are necessary.

I believe that the arts—literature, poetry, music,

drama, architecture, philosophy, true science, criticism, painting, sculpture, dancing—are the warmth and glory of life and the essential virtues of a civilization. And we are beginning to wake up to our lack in these forms and to do something about them too. The state is finally taking cognizance of the theatre, of book-publishing, of painting, of sculpture, and making appropriations to encourage them. Instance the North Carolina Symphony, the art gallery at Raleigh and the University Press here at Chapel Hill. Aesthetic and imaginative recreational programs are being organized throughout the state. With the leisure and easy means of communication and travel and get-together provided by this our machine age, our people are more and more taking an interest in their traditions—memorializing the best of our past in school plays, outdoor dramas, in historical novels, in celebrations, in orations, in essays and in the work of historical societies and groups.

The state is at last producing some writers. The work of our women's book and literary clubs is acting as a great stimulation for creative production. Our different colleges are establishing courses, giving college credit for imaginative work in writing, in painting, in music and the kindred arts.

Everywhere about us is felt an upward lift in our civilization. But it is in the main only felt, it is just beginning.

Consider that the only great painter North Carolina has ever had came to us on Roanoke Island in 1585 in the person of John White. And when he returned to England the next year he left the state without an important artist of the brush to fill his place to this day—a stretch of those same four centuries mentioned above.

And not until O. Henry and Tom Wolfe came along did this state produce any story-tellers of prime excellence. We have never produced a first-rate musician or composer, no first-rate philosopher nor critic nor essayist, no

first-rate scientist or statesman—that is, first-rate enough to help mold and influence the course of the world's history, no supremely great poet, singer, dancer, actor, or dramatist.

But we will produce them. In time we will. For we have the stuff in our people out of which to develop and grow them. And the opportunity and encouragement are here.

7.

For all our roll-call of accomplishments then and things done, we actually have got only a little way along. While we have been making this great material and some cultural progress, other states and sections also have been taking their strides forward. Most of them, except for a few in the southeastern region, have far out-distanced us.

There are a million children going to public schools each year in North Carolina, and this would be joyful news to Governor Aycock. But it would be sad news for him to learn that two thirds of them drop out before they ever finish high school and less than one out of fifteen ever finish college. This is an enormous casualty list along the way. And compare these figures with those of any New England or middle-western state. Here we stand, or rather lie, forty-seventh in the nation.

So, after all these wonderful years and in spite of Aycock and his followers, we still are near the bottom among the states in, of all things, education. And the same is true in per capita income, and in wages paid, in farm income, in old age benefits, in books and magazines read, in money spent for health, in dentists and doctors, and on and so on. We still import butter, milk, apples, eggs, beef, pork, shoes, tools and dozens and dozens of other things which we should raise or make ourselves—at a cost annually of more than three hundred millions of our hard-earned dollars.

And here are some of the saddest statistics of all. There is a constant and heavy drainage of migration out of our state that shows no signs of stopping. We lose more than fifty thousand of our best skilled workers and artizans every year who go to seek better opportunities elsewhere. And every year more than sixty thousand of our finest young high school and college people, our best brains and talents, move away from the state. These are the very people from whom our further cultural and spiritual as well as material progress must come.

Of course their talents and abilities are not lost in the body of the republic. But as I said before, home is home and a man has to have a home to function at his best. He has to belong to be at his creative best. The tearing up of roots and getting started elsewhere afresh often require too much psychic dislocation. It is my belief that if the young people of North Carolina stayed at home and worked where they are, brought their best gifts to bear on the problems and challenges here, their lives would be more fruitful and rich in joy and results both for themselves and society around them. We must somehow keep them in North Carolina. We must find ways to offer them a full and exciting and dramatic chance for living, and they must learn how to find it, to accept it and stay here and create.

8.

Now why do we, why does the South, for all our attainments continue to lag behind in these things? Why are we always in the rear rank, even stragglers, in the march of the nation's progress? No doubt there is a whole concatenation of reasons, but I think the foremost reason of all is our unrealistic and impractical attitude toward the Negro. Say that this is not a reason but a result of a long-past custom of social living. That is to make no explanation. For a result in a chain of events always becomes in

turn a cause for a succeeding result. And I believe our treatment of the Negro continues to be the real source of our comparative econmic and cultural poverty.

This minority group constitutes about one-third of our total population below the Mason-Dixon line. It simply is not possible, no matter how much we court northern industry and seek new sources of revenue—it is not possible for us to build a thriving state and region when so vast a number of our people are discriminated against and denied full privileges for self-expression and growth. How could a railroad bridge, say, be strong if one third of the piers that held it up were weak? How could a football team win victories if a third of its members were crippled and hamstrung? So it is with any institution, state or nation. It is a matter of obvious addition and subtraction to say so, to know so.

In this beloved state of ours since its first settling nearly three hundred years ago, some ten to twelve millions of Negroes—human beings—have lived and died. And out of that number who could make even a brief roll-call of individuals who have developed their lives to anything like their full capabilities? Where are our even adequate Negro scientists, our Negro poets and composers, our philosophers, doctors, physicists, novelists, engineers, agriculturists, botanists, lawyers, architects, educators, manufacturers? There have been a few, a pitiful few, who by almost superhuman effort and against every difficulty have been able to emerge out of their poverty to a bit of local prominence. Think of the appalling loss, the waste!

Today the per capita income of the Negro in North Carolina is around one-half of that of the white man. That means his earning power is just that and his purchasing power the same. Think what potential markets are gone with that lost income and likewise taxes for schools, hospitals and roads. And money, cries the governor and legislators, is so desperately needed!

Is it because the Negroes are by race inferior in their hearts and minds and abilities that they have failed so? Of course not. The myth of innate racial superiority has been exploded long ago. It is all a matter of environment and opportunity. The Negroes are a great and gifted people. They are our people. They are us! But through these long years they have had no proper chance. They have been kept down, hindered, suppressed.

And even now in these days of world revolution and release of human aspirations elsewhere—aspirations fired often into actions by our own philosophy of government—in Asia, Africa, in the Middle East—the political leaders in North Carolina and in most of the Southern states as well are still determined to keep the Negroes in what they call their place. What ignorance, what piteous stupidity!

Obviously the real wealth of a state or a nation lies ever in the talents of the people themselves—all the people irrespective of race, color, or kind. Should we not then work to release these talents and energies here in North Carolina, here in the South, encourage them to grow rather than trying to stifle them? For if we did so, then this region would in time be not the poorest section in the nation as it is today, but the richest—richest in all the good and creative things of life.

Yes, the time has come for us, for you young people, to get busy as citizens, as patriotic Americans, on this matter especially. We have been too slow, we have too long delayed in honestly tackling this problem of race relations. We have slid around it. And now that the Federal Supreme Court has spoken the law of the land, the imperative to do our duty is clearer and stronger than ever. We must change our outlook and our practice. Common sense, true religion, sound science, the drift of the age, the bent of the modern world demand it. We can no longer afford to be a party to this prejudiced withholding of the economic and social blessings of our democracy from so great a

number of our people. We must make our political faith a living fact—living not for some of our people but for all the people. To refuse to do so is to be betrayers of the very principles which gave this nation its birth and inspired its growth. And these principles are as vital and compelling today as ever they were—nay, more compelling than ever.

9.

As you know from your history teachings here, our government was founded on the basic concept that all men are created equal—not equal in talent, in wealth and quantitative strength, but equal in the soul, equal in their inviolate right and claim to justice, to fair play, to opportunity. Thomas Jefferson set this down as the prime truth, the first ideal, in the Declaration of Independence. And again and again our founding fathers in their writings, in their speeches, affirmed and reaffirmed that ideal—Washington, Franklin, Adams, Hamilton, Mason, Madison and others.

The principles growing out of this moral intuition were later summed up and put forth in a shining roll-call in the bill of rights of our Federal Constitution—"Freedom of religion, of speech, of the press, of the right of the people peaceably to assemble and to petition the government for a redress of their grievances, security of a people in their person and property, due process of law, habeas corpus, trial by jury, and freedom from slavery and servitude as becomes free men."

These are the constituents then, the elements of moral and social strength, the ancient but ever-lasting truths that have gone into the making of our philosophy of government—the righteous doctrine out of which our ideal, our American dream, has manifested itself forth in a great republic and which today demand of you the best that you have to give.

And I believe you will give that best. I believe you

will no longer be willing to share in the failures of this state and region, share in the guilty responsibility of cruel repressions now practiced among us. You will want to, will be eager to give of your full talent and strength in helping bring this country into a final and fine flowering of waiting greatness—a nation of justice, truth, courage and cooperation among men.

The time is now, the place is here.

Then to work. And as we all work and sing and pull together, we shall at last make for all our people, rich and poor, black and white, high and low, this beloved North Carolina what it ought to be and will be in truth and deed —"the goodliest land under the cope of heaven."

Such is the challenge, such the opportunity open to you.

Date Due

Due	Returned	Due	Returned
APR 5 - '65	MAR 28 '65 MD		

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